



**The King Pins**  
**Dragging Wild Angels, Fat Hogs & Cycle Sluts Down To Hell**  
Phillip Brophy



### Track 1

Mark 'Chopper' Read – infamous for employing chop-shock mythology to maintain power in the Melbourne underworld of the 70s – comes from a line of choppers. The inverse of the cool hitman of pulp lore, Chopper chose his moniker well. Chopping is the work of hacks. Artistry evaporates in the steaming gore unleashed by their frenzied chopping-up of those who crossed their paths. The chopper/hacker's victim is sign of their brute handiwork. Chopper played out (and now replays) the anti-artist who – like your average building subcontractor in the Yellow Pages™ – does the job shoddily, fucks you over, and moves on. His chopped ears recall the art-brut of Ned Kelly's chop-top iron-gear. Ned's armour suggests a Westie yob in Camelot. Sydney Nolan romanticised the pre-Ellsworth Kelly design of Ned Kelly's minimalist body sculpture and lionised it in his own Kelly

Paintings (1946/7). But old Ned was a hack and could care less for art. He was a crim and a two-bit folk hero, and like all asocial crims, seduced the intelligentsia to suck his metal.

### Track 2

'Choppers' mostly recall revved-up motor bikes, but they owe their procedure to customizing cars. Chopping in car culture emanates from American post-war modifications of early 40s cars. 'Chopping the top' meant slicing half the height of the windows all round, then sticking the roof back on to create a quasi-aerodynamic bullet-machine. But chop-tops weren't invented for speed: they were carved as signs of stealth, slinkiness, slyness. These vehicles hugged the road (especially once the chopped-top combined with the lowered chassis of the Hispanic Low Rider) in a street performance of prowling and cruising, proclaiming their predatory status in the face of the Law. The notion of chopping one's body – be it your car or your physique – extended into 60s American biker culture. Motor bikes underwent a frenzy of modifications: extended front-forks, elongated banana seats, elevated sissy bars, exaggerated handle bars. Only a retard would miss the point: the chopper bike was a hard-on, in line with a long, long history of erectology in man-machine mutations.

### Track 3

Bikers occupy a unique niche in this history and its pop mythology. From Brando in THE WILD ONE (1951) to the Hells Angels in GIMME SHELTER (1970), two decades of real and unreal bikers enacted the cock-stroking machismo that makes the biker one of the most hysterical male-o-dramas of the 20th Century. Like Joseph Campbell being blown by Hunter S. Thompson while Tom Wolfe camcords it for posterity, the grand myth of the biker is tackier than the footballer drag queens of today's television. Messiah, Viking, Jesus, Satan, Blackbeard all rolled into





one, the hirsute brute of the biker is so desperately male that his performative energy creates a transformative field around his body. Robed in his mystical tokens, he becomes a riotous delusion of warrior supremacy. Ranging from weedy runts on speed to fat pigs full of booze, the classic bikers of the post-Altamont 70s meld straddle their Harleys™ like giant dildos, tea-bagging their balls and massaging their anal ring. They're not riding: they're being rid by their mama with a strap-on. All the leather – sign of animal skin – and all the hair – sign of wild trappers – doesn't hide the fuck-me thrill these macho bitches dig. But you can't thrill to the dill and still live the butch myth of Bikerdom. Hence the open debasement of women as a sign of Dionysian debauchery. Bikers stage wild rodeos to rustle their women, tying them up as bitches, hogs, mamas, whatever. With no fundamental difference from the respectable doctrine of

marriage, some die in the process while others revel in it. Hell-driven harlots in their vertical cross-laced suede pants hugging their thighs like trussed-up turkeys ready for devouring, they provide a feast for the Nordic warrior and his K-Mart™ pewter goblet. His bike – he calls it the bitch. His woman – she's his hog. He doesn't know if he's fucking or riding, coming or going. His whole world is a vaginated machine realm for his meta-cock machinery. He is Hell on wheels.

#### Track 4

Ultimately, bikers are drag artists. Like any mythology hanging on its heralded costumery, it has to don and put on in order to become. Glen Hughes (the 'Leather Man' from the Village People™) is the epitome of what Bikerdom becomes. With a forest round his mouth like a bush round a gash, his dense follicular frames the gay fuck-hole with vaginal lure. Adorned in shiny (not grimy) black leather, he is a Hell's Angel drag-god, figurehead to a complete fist-fucking empire of armed cocks. His trans-theatricalised S+M (already the most theatrical of all sexual practices) figures his ilk less curs from Jean Genet's day-dreams and more cads from Andrew Lloyd Webber's wet-dreams. Today, yuppie real estate agents take their pana-tanned bimbos out on picnics riding their Harleys™ in a healthy sexual pantomime. The missus is good for keeping the leather shiny, while hubby preens his cylinder shafts like the family front garden. He shaves her pussy; she shaves his head. They're a regular Demi Moore and Bruce Willis at their 80s peak. If they're real 'crazy' they probably had a Harley™ wedding. If you want one, just check the Yellow Pages™ for one in your area. The 90s weekend hoppers visiting wineries aren't a bastardization of the 'real' 70s macho studs with their porno-moustaches and metallic belt buckles. They're the same thing in the same drag outfit.

## Track 5

The first mention of 'heavy metal' has been sited as occurring in Steppenwolf's BORN TO BE WILD (1968). The phrase "heavy metal thunder" refers to the roar of the Harley™ and its noisy Futurist subsonic bleating. The firing of the motor bike's cylinders that produces the low-end jittering is refigured in 80s Death Metal. The double-kick pedal 'bleats' its beats as a rumbling blur, while the 'parox-seismic' vocal chords are left to flutter similarly. Growling and howling, Metal music is the abject sound of Bikerdom: Death Metal, Speed Metal and Black Metal verge on sounding like roaring motorbikes. Conversely, the musical sound of Bikerdom is bad boogie rock. Like an anti-mirror to gatherings at Jimmy Buffet concerts, Broadford resounds to the blur of Southern/Texan hard rock, fuelled by white macho angst and bulk-buy bins of Southern Comfort™. The Angels seemed to always be playing there – maybe because of their name. Bastard children of the Vanda and Young dynasty (which also brought us the foxy shopping mall bitches of Cheetah), the Angels chugged like a new-waved AC/DC. None of these bands rode Harleys as part of their mythology, but big bad bikes seemed to cluster around those who wished to be bad to the bone. The best insignia of Bikerdom occurs in early 70s Glam. Alvin Stardust, Gary Glitter and Suzi Quatro all drove massive bikes on stage as part of their 'spectacular' entrance (or had their stage hands push them in on the bikes). Suzi went on to become Leather Tuscadero – a pink leather-clad biker to Fonzie's bad-boy on HAPPY DAYS (1975). To say either were 'real' would be like writing the word 'rebellion' somewhere in this paragraph.

## Track 6

The Aussie Biker is a feral mutation of his American mytho-type. Low budget Oz classics like STONE (1974) and COSY COOL



(1977) copy the American templates of WILD ANGELS (1966) and its para-doco slap-dash of scenography, BORN LOSERS (1967) and its Western loner anti-hero, and EASY RIDER (1969) and its pithy distilled spirit of the dying 60s. (The irony is that rednecks shoot the hippy bikers in EASY RIDER while redneck bikers shot a black hippy in GIMME SHELTER.) By the 70s, the biker in cinema believed itself to be heroic, tragic, vainglorious, epiphanous, whatever. STONE and COSY COOL revel in this delusion, positing their characters as ghosts of Ned, living in the cultural wasteland of rural Australia. Coming well after the genre, MAD MAX combines its remnants with dystopian sci-fi and fetishizes Bikerdom even more. Its deluded attempts to 'be bad' (especially in MAD MAX II, 1981) reveal the hardcore drag-core of Bikerdom. The leathery feathery paraphernalia of the mohawkers and toe-cutters is straight out of the style-conscious Italian comic RANXEROX (1980) and joins a global



continuity of issuing punks and bikers in leather as 'bad boys'. The badness in *MAD MAX III* (1985) is hyper-drag: Mel in bad wigs; Tina in bad wigs; Angry Anderson in bad wigs. From Frank Thring's thespian queen to Tina Turner's Acid Queen, the whole film drowns in drag, yoked as it is to the drag condition of Bikerdom's originating machismo. The American film *HIGHWAY TO HELL* (1992) depicts a biker cop who has been necromantically revived to patrol his own Highway Hell, trapping and devouring those who innocently cross its threshold. From *WAKE IN FRIGHT* (1971) to *THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT* (1994), the Australian landscape is a gigantic shallow hell-hole (as if Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide aren't cosmo-wannabe-shitholes). *HIGHWAY TO HELL*'s use of the AC/DC anthem mythically aligns itself with our landscape, but the original song as heard through Bon Scott's head has nothing to do with the intellectualised angst of our 'distant shore'. It's a paean to the rev-head dead-end compulsion to drive on into the unknown full-throttle and substance-fuelled. Maybe the inner beauty of AC/DC is that they escaped drag – and still do to this day.

### Track 7

The King Pins aren't drag. For them, drag is a verb: they drag stuff. The invocation of lesbo drag kings clearly rises from their name, but it's not central to their domain. The King Pins are on stage all the time: everything and everyone around them is already in drag – from fairy princesses to shopping mall lords to pimply kids working at Starbucks™. Everyone is a performer and every space is a stage. The King Pins accordingly frame the performative that already exists, producing multi-layered mime and mimicry which could care less for what's real and what's not. In line with the drag king effect, the King Pins are celebratory in their performance. It's a crucial difference. Where the Drag Queen abjects himself in the act of becoming that which is most monstrous to him – the feminine – the Drag King





becomes the masculine in recognition of a monstrosity pre-celebrated in machismo culture. Men love being enraged and ravenous monsters, figuring them as drag artistes of their own fucked-up psyche. Their desire is always an act of becoming the monstrous, so no points for 'pointing it out to us'. The King Pins rework this through a twisted and inseparable mix of playing-up and dressing-up; playing-out and going-out. The drag queen tragically dreams of actually being the prom queen in a phantasmal space of that which most becomes a woman, and in turn burlesques his fractured womanhood in a self-destructive viciousness that marks the drag stage as mix of misogyny and nihilism (hence its popularity with the footballers: two tinnies and they're in a frock). The King Pins would have nightmares over becoming their characters. Of course they could be fun nightmares of carnivalesque thrills, but the through-line of the drag king is comparatively clearer than the drag queen's oft-desperate performance.

## Track 8

When the King Pins invoke Bikerdom, the nightmare is laughably writ large in glowing lights. If they abject anything, it's the tacky tokens of machismo that make male-ness so laughable. In an act of transformation that is more trans-gendering than gender-dividing, their biker bitches are chimera of bearish lumberjacks in a Goya-esque void – but riding a grotesquely sissified girlie-girl BMX™. Their go-go dancers evoke Tina Turner's lion mane morphed onto a glittering Mattel poseable-action doll from SHOWGIRLS (1995 – no there are no such dolls, but there should have been). The staging is part televisual, part videosonic, part fairground attraction. It's the mash-up of coded fashion and socialised bodies that generates the King Pin drag. Like girl biker gangs from movies like *FASTER, PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!* (1965) and *SHE DEVILS ON WHEELS* (1968), the King Pins are a girl gang of thrill-seeking artists. If it shits you that they're dressing up, screaming, laughing and having fun –

that's your problem. They aren't going to give you a poe-faced affectation of post-feminist griping. In a world that is happy to have an endless supply of Dianne Arbuses, Virginia Woolfes and Frida Kahlos – the whole 'beautiful tragedy' of fucked-up and fucked-over women – the King Pins refute the 'exposed self' in preference for the 'developed self': woman as vessel, container, well and vial, ready to take any culture jism going and able to expel it back as a reconverted figure. The King Pins have pulled in to another desolate truck-stop on their hogs. Filled up, fired up and revved up, these bitches are ready to head down their hard-on to hell.

